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Pfeffer, Studies respecting Symmetry and Specific Causes of Growth. (An examination of the influence of surroundings upon the growth of a liverwort.) 3. J. Sachs, On the Influence of the Temperature of the Air and the Effect of Daylight on the Periodical Changes in the Rate of Growth of Internodes in Length. (See abstract in Sachs' Text-Book, page 735 *et seq.* In the memoir, Professor Sachs has given a very full *résumé* of the literature of the subject.) 4. J. Sachs, On Negative Geotropism. (Observations respecting the curving upwards of shoots from a stem placed horizontally.) 5. J. Sachs, On the Deflection of Roots from their Normal Direction of Growth by Contact with Moist Surfaces. (See abstract in Sachs' Text-Book, page 764.) 6. Hugo de Vries, On some Causes of the Direction taken by Parts or Plants which possess Bilateral Symmetry. (The effects of gravitation, light, defoliation, etc., are examined. The views of Frank are contested. See Text-Book, page 705.) 7. J. Sachs, The Plant and the Eye as Different Tests for Light. (Sachs had early insisted upon a distinction between objective intensity of light and its brightness to the eye. Prillieux in a paper on the subject is thought to have overlooked these distinctions, as well as that between refrangibility (objective) and color (subjective). In the present memoir Professor Sachs reviews the literature of the subject, defends his former position, and further explains the relation between the intensity of light and the activity of assimilation.)

ZOÖLOGY.

THE CROSSBILL BREEDING AT RIVERDALE, N. Y.—This bird (*Loxia curvirostra* var. *Americana*) made its appearance here last autumn, November 3d. Small flocks were occasionally seen all winter, and through March and April, feeding on seeds of cones of the Norway spruce and larch. On April 22d I noticed a pair building near the top of a red cedar, about eighteen feet from the ground. The nest, April 30th, contained three eggs, and was composed of strips of cedar bark, dried grass, and stems of the Norway spruce, and was lined with horse-hair, feathers, dried grass, and fibrous roots. The eggs were about the size of those of *Junco hyemalis*, in color very light blue, slightly sprinkled and blotched at the large end with dark purple. I saw a small flock of six of these birds May 10th, which were the last seen here. Riverdale is on the Hudson River, sixteen miles north of New York Bay.—E. A. BICKNELL.

BEWICK'S WREN (*Thryothorus Bewicki*), although not a well-known bird to those not ornithologists, is not "something of a rarity" in the middle Atlantic States, as stated by Dr. Coues in the January number of the NATURALIST. I have not failed to find considerable numbers of them for several years past. They appear to have a strong attachment for certain localities, and, if undisturbed, will return year after year to

the same spot to breed. An interesting feature in the habits of this species is the marked variation of their vocal powers. While some are remarkably fine singers, others are very commonplace, or else too lazy to exercise their capabilities. — CHARLES C. ABBOTT, M. D., Trenton, N. J.

FLOWERS OF THE GOLDEN CURRANT PERFORATED BY HUMBLEBEES. — In Part 7 of *Half-Hours with Insects*, page 202, it is stated that the first and only instance known in this country of the curious trait of the humblebees of perforating the corollas of flowers to get the honey is given by Mr. W. W. Bailey in *THE AMERICAN NATURALIST*, 1873.

Last spring a cluster of *Ribes aureum* growing in my dooryard was visited by humblebees, and I noticed that they always extracted the honey through perforations in the bases of the calyces made by their mandibles. When at least three fourths of the flowers had been despoiled in this way, so great was their dexterity that seven flowers per minute were found bitten open and robbed of their honey. The same was noticed by Mr. Struthers, of Fort Atkinson, on the flowers of *Robinia pseudacacia*, in 1863. — W. F. BUNDY.

HABITS OF WESTERN BIRDS. — As we encamped on Antelope Creek, Nevada, May 28th, I at once proceeded to procure specimens, and in following up the stream a short distance I came upon a thicket of willows, in which I found a large nest, occupied by one of the parent birds. After securing the bird, which proved to be the female of *Buteo Swainsoni*, and crawling up to the nest for the eggs, I noticed a slight commotion amongst the leaves but a short distance away, which upon examination proved to have been caused by a pair of Bullock's orioles (*Icterus Bullockii*), which were also breeding. Both of these nests were about twelve feet from the ground, only eight feet apart, and unprotected from above, by the absence of any branches or leaves. The orioles had certainly built in a dangerous locality, and must have been entirely unmolested by the hawks, as the eggs in both nests were far advanced in incubation.

Later in the season (August) we camped at Big Pines, Owens Valley, Cal., where we saw great numbers of humming-birds flying around the tops of the pine-trees. Towards evening some were seen near the ground, and after watching them very closely for a while I saw one alight close by, which soon after flew to its nest. The nest was built upon a small cottonwood branch, exactly over and but about two feet above a perfect torrent of water rising in the glacial summit of the Sierra Nevadas. The species (as Professor Baird has since informed me) was *Stellula Caliope*. The nest, eggs, and skins, with those above referred to, are now at the Smithsonian Institution, together with the general collections.

In the December number of the *NATURALIST* for 1873, Mr. Allen answers Dr. Barrett (?) in reference to the supposed geographical "distribution," or rather range, of the crow and raven. As he says, they are

gregarious throughout the region over which we passed in 1873, Yellowstone River, etc., and I can say the same of Nevada, in the valley of the Payhee and Humboldt rivers. Frequently, while working our way slowly up the Grand Cañon of the Colorado River, where the plateau was over six thousand feet above us, with walls at an angle (from base to summit) of nearly eighty degrees, we found numbers of crows and ravens flying over our heads, or perched upon the projecting ledges of sandstone or basalt. Rather dismal to hear the croaking in such a locality, — the bottom of a gorge, one and a quarter miles below the surface. — W. J. HOFFMAN, M. D.

REMARKABLE STRUCTURE OF YOUNG FISHES. — Dr. Günther, of London, has recently discovered that the young of the sword-fishes and *Chaetodus* possess structures exceedingly different from that of the adult. In the young *Chaetodus* the front of the body is shielded with large bony plates, which in one species are produced into three long, equidistant horns, which diverge ray-like from the body. In the sword-fishes the scapular arch is prolonged into a horn at the lower part, and the belly fins are wanting. There is no sword, but the jaws are long, of equal length, and both are furnished with teeth. As the fish grows, the scapular horn disappears, the ventral fins grow, and the upper jaw is developed in excess of the lower. The long teeth disappear, and the upper jaw grows into the toothless, sword-like weapon which gives the fish its peculiar character.

UNUSUAL NESTING SITES OF THE NIGHT HAWK AND TOWHEE BUNTING. — A letter from Mr. William Couper, of Montreal, speaks of his having found the eggs of *Chordeiles popetue* on the flat roofs of buildings in that city, and the nest of *Pipilo erythrophthalmus* in a small tree about three feet from the ground. In each of these cases the departure from the usual habit of the species is decided. — ELLIOTT COUES.

EGGS OF BOA-CONSTRUCTOR. — My friend, Dr. Kunzé, has shown me an infertile egg of a boa which he lately obtained at the Central Park menagerie. The boa laid twenty-one eggs, each about the size of a hen's egg. The animal made the deposit in sight of her keeper and others. She laid two fertile eggs, and then a sterile one, in regular succession; each third egg was sterile. The fertile eggs had each a young boa within. One came out of its shell immediately after being laid, but soon died. All the others died within their shells. The sterile eggs were albuminous throughout, and cut like cheese and smelled like sperm oil. Could this be the balance of an impregnation received the year before? — S. LOCKWOOD.

SMALL BIRDS CAUGHT BY THE BURDOCK. — At Lake George, a gentleman presented me with a skeleton of a humming-bird, firmly fastened to some burs, which he found on a burdock; and at the same time he found a live one on a plant near by. I was walking along one of our country roads, when I saw a yellow-bird (*Chrysomitris tristis*) fluttering

on a burdock, and when I stooped to catch it, it tore itself away, leaving a number of its feathers on the burs. A few days after, I caught a yellow-rumped warbler (*Dendroica coronata*) fastened to the same kind of plant. — A. K. FISHER.

ANTHROPOLOGY.

ANTHROPOLOGICAL NOTES.— Those who attempt to institute a comparison respecting the elaboration of culture in the Old World and in the New, and to sum up the contributions of nature in the two hemispheres, must not forget that in the western men wrought only with their hands, that they had the service of not a single tractive animal, of no beast of burden excepting the llama, that they had no cows for milk, no domestic animals for slaughter; and but for the faithful wolf-dog, the aborigines of North America would have been absolutely cut off from the advantages of those friends of man which in the eastern hemisphere are indissolubly linked with progress.

The railway companies of Western Germany having taken steps to secure and preserve all historical and prehistorical relics found in their gradings, some rich discoveries have been their reward. At Durkheim a highly ornamented Roman tripod inlaid with gold and other metals was found. Near Eisenberg, a Roman grave with rich deposits was opened.

Prof. George Rolleston's paper in the *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* (v. ii. 120), On the People of the Long Barrow Period, is a very interesting treatment of the subject. We can extract only a few sentences. As to the physical characteristics of the people, the male skeletons were very generally about 5.5 feet, the female 4.8 feet. The average difference between the statures of males and females in civilized races is about half this amount, while a precisely similar disproportion is observable at the present day in the stature of individuals of the two sexes among savages. In studying the skulls we are to take into account what the author, quoting Professor Cleland, calls "ill-filledness," or the presence of ridges and depressions occasioned by scanty feeding and lack of comfort. Speaking of the age of the barrows, there is no doubt that they are the first sepulchral evidences of the existence of man in Britain. Pristine or priscan man, like the modern savage, grudged no labor less than that which was spent in piling up a huge mound. Mr. H. W. Mosely, naturalist to the Challenger, in recording his observations on the Kudang tribe of Australia, living near Cape York, says that though they are destitute of almost everything in the way of property, having neither perforated stones to help them dig roots, as have the Bushmen, nor boomerangs, nor tomahawks, nor canoes; living not on the available wallabies and phalanges, but on fish, reptiles, invertebrates, and vegetables; having the scantiest clothing; being, finally, below savagery, as understood by a good judge of it, Professor Nillson, in having no